



NOVEMBER 2013 NEWSPAPER

B&P LEADERSHIP CHANGES: NOVEMBER 2013

A Short History

The Black & Pink Free World Leadership Circle (LC) that we have right now came together in 2010 with about 5-7 people. In 2011, the Free World LC added an Incarcerated Leadership Circle of 10 people in prison. We did this to help meet our goal of basing our work on the experiences of people in prison. We had elections in the Newspaper and all members could vote, and everyone elected 10 people on the inside, and 8 people on the outside (the Free World LC).

The Leadership Circle was set up to have a 1 year term. In the Free World, there are not enough people to fill 10 positions, so there has been no need to chose another group of people. For members in prison, there are many people to fill 10 positions. The terms of the current members are done; we had planned to run elections again in 2012, but it seemed too soon at that time.

Where We Are Now

There are now 3 Free World members from 2010 still on the LC, plus 3-5 new people. We have 4 people left on the Incarcerated LC- Jenni, Shaylanna, Mystique, & Kelly. We lost incarcerated Leaders for different reasons: they stopped writing us, they were released, there was concerns of racism, they never provided any leadership input, and others. Through a combination of choices of Free World and Incarcerated members, the Incarcerated LC has not been functioning for several months now.

Communication Challenges

Making decisions with a Leadership Circle with people on the inside and outside has been hard. It is very hard to create a "consensus," to hear everyone's voice and come up with an agreement or compromise that works for everyone. Communication is difficult in/out of prison. The LC in prison can't talk to each other. The Free World can't talk face-to-face with anyone in prison. Decisions that were before being made in 20 minutes at a Free World meeting, instead take lots of coordination, many months of back-and-forth letter writing, and may never reach a decision.

Making decisions with a Free World & Incarcerated LC also takes time for the Free World to coordinate. It is a good use of time; and it's also true that we do many things to serve the mission of the organization, and we often feel stress about having enough time to get everything done. (And as a result, sometimes don't follow through on our intentions and projects).

What Could Have Been Done Better

There are a few ways the Free World LC has not done the best job: We haven't provided a lot of resources for organizing and leadership in prison. We haven't kept in touch as good as we should have.

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We have been using a "buddy system," where each Free World person writes to 1-2 people in prison. But, when a Free World person leaves the LC, we often lost touch with their buddy. And individuals in the Free World LC did not always write their buddy regularly.

Who Has Power in B&P

The way things have been working, the Free World has chosen which decisions would be decided on by the Full LC (for example, choosing a bank, and choosing fiscal sponsor) and which would be only the Free World LC (for example, making the budget, and changing from NewsLetter to NewsPaper). The Free World LC has been making decisions that need to happen soon, which is most of them. And decisions that can take longer to make have been often put out to the whole LC. In reality, the Free World and Incarcerated LC does not have equal power: there is a real difference in power in the world between people in and out of prison, and this imbalance has been on our Circle as well.

Attempts at Changes

The Free World LC made a proposal in the May 2013 Newspaper to change from an elected group of 10 incarcerated people, to instead a "poll" or vote on each decision by all membership. Jenni, Incarcerated B&P Leadership Circle member in California, disagreed strongly. She wrote, "This is basically a unilateral action by the Free World LC to simply abolish the incarcerated LC." She noted that it doesn't work to expand decision-making power to everyone, especially if trying to use consensus (where everyone agrees, instead of a simple vote). As Jenni talks about, the Feedback Form does not give everyone "decision-making power" like the Incarcerated LC has. Instead, it gives a way for any family member to share thoughts. These thoughts are then considered by the Leadership Circle, who make the decisions. She proposed having another election for an incarcerated LC, and setting better standards and expectations before elections.

Accountability

We are guided by People, and by our Statement of Purpose and Analysis (which was written by the Free World LC in 2011 with only 1 person who had been in prison). Clearly, LGBTQ people in prison are a diverse group. We have many different opinions and politics. Sometimes the views of individuals match well with our official politics, sometimes they don't. When it comes to making decisions that impact the group, the Free World LC has been prioritizing the voices of incarcerated members who have a similar vision as the one we set up. In this way, we are accountable to a mix of People- LGBTQ people in prison- and to Politics- the feminist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, queer liberation politics we hold.

And it's true that these politics *are* created by the experiences of LGBTQ people who are or were in prison. For the Free World LC, we are queer. Some of us have been in prison. We have been reading your letters, hundreds every month, for years. We have been listening to other Free World prison abolition groups. We have been learning from the history of queer resistance to prisons, and other movements for justice against oppressive systems.

Moving Forward

If the decision before the LC is to change the Leadership Structure, then clearly we are not all in agreement. But it's also true that, if the decision before the LC is whether we want to continue the current form of the LC, again we are not all in agreement.

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Statement of Purpose

Black & Pink is an open family of LGBTQ prisoners and "free world" allies who support each other. Our work toward the abolition of the prison industrial complex is rooted in the experience of currently and formerly incarcerated people. We are outraged by the specific violence of the prison industrial complex against LGBTQ people, and respond through advocacy, education, direct service, and organizing.

About this Newspaper

Since 2007, Black & Pink free world volunteers have pulled together a monthly newspaper primarily composed of material written by our family's incarcerated members. In response to letters we receive, more prisoners receive the newspaper each issue!

This month, the newspaper is being sent to:
3,761 prisoners!

Disclaimer:

Please note that the ideas and opinions expressed in the Black & Pink Newspaper are solely those of the authors and artists and do not necessarily reflect the views of Black & Pink. Black & Pink makes no representations as to the accuracy of any statements made in the Newspaper, including but not limited to legal and medical information. Authors and artists bear sole responsibility for their work.

Everything published in the Newspaper is also on the internet: it can be seen by anyone with a computer. By sending a letter to "Newspaper Submissions," you are agreeing to have your piece in the Newspaper and on the internet. For this reason, we only publish First Names and State Location to respect people's privacy.

Call for Submissions to New Erotica Zine!

Seeking erotic short stories and poems by Black & Pink incarcerated and free-world family members for a new 'zine.

Please send submissions to our Black & Pink - Gabrielle. This is a voluntary project, and no money will be offered for submissions, but you might get the chance to share your spicy story with many others! To subscribe to receive erotica, write to our new address, Black & Pink - Erotica.

A MESSAGE FROM JASON

Dear friends,

I hope this newspaper finds you as well as possible. You will notice lots of internal Black and Pink information in this issue. We are trying to be as accountable as possible to your leadership. Thank you for taking the time to read, reflect, and respond to our changes. It is through your input that we are able to become a better organization, a stronger family.

It is important to take a moment to acknowledge those of our family members who are incarcerated in the federal system and had some of their services cut during the government shut down. I know that some prisons had visits cut for a while. I know other places cut some education and recovery services. While we are working towards a world where we are not funding the prison system, that is not the way we would move the work forward. While many of us work to shut down the government permanently, we are not trying to follow the path of Tea Party Republicans. The Massachusetts Senator, Elizabeth Warren, may have called the Right Wing leadership of the Republican party "anarchists," but we know they are far from the ideals we hold.

November is the beginning of the winter holiday season. I know that this can be a really tough time, and I want all of our Black and Pink incarcerated family to know that those of us on the outside are thinking about you and keeping you in our hearts. While a holiday like Thanksgiving is one where many families come together across the United States, it is also important to remember what the holiday is really about. The Thanksgiving story that gets told year after year is a myth created by white settlers. The story that European colonists and the Indigenous people, of what is now Massachusetts, had a lovely feast together to celebrate unity is based on lies. In reality, the first Thanksgiving

was a celebration of the colonists coming back from murdering hundreds of men, women, and children of the Pequot nation. Thanksgiving was a dinner honoring those who had killed the people whose land they stole.

While the true Thanksgiving story is about something done in the past, the impact of land theft and white colonists crosses the centuries. Did you know that the early prisons in the United States were often used as warehouses to hold Indigenous people? The prisons that are holding our Black and Pink family today are similar to the stone buildings that incarcerated the people whose land these modern prisons are built on. We also have members of Black and Pink who are Indigenous to this land, who are continuing to be colonized. The creation of the United States, the theft of this land, is not over. Land is continuing to be stolen. Indigenous people are forced onto Reservations and have the highest rate of incarceration in the country. Prisons continue to be tools of land theft. When Black and Pink joins in the fight against prison/jail expansion, we are also taking sides with those fighting against their land being stolen.

As November continues on we will also welcome the beginning days of Hanukkah. We also align with those in our Jewish family who commemorate this miracle of lights. As they do so we think about the ways Judaism is used to justify the theft of Palestinian land. We encourage those who are thinking about the menorah candles' flame to hold the life of Palestinians in your hearts when you pray for the power of miracles to continue. This holiday season we remember how complicated our days are and we keep our fight going knowing that once there were no prisons, that day will come again.

In loving solidarity,
Jason

B&P LEADERSHIP CHANGES: NOVEMBER 2013 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Changes for Now

For now, the Free World LC has decided to change the Leadership structure back to what it was in 2010, with the addition of listening to everyone's input through letters and the Newspaper's Feedback Form. We feel that it's not the best use of organizational resources to run a new election and maintain an incarcerated Leadership Circle at this time. We don't have the ability to do a good job on this, and do everything else we do too. The reality right now is that our B&P Family has thousands of members in prison, and is coordinated by a small team of Free World members. We plan to use our time and energy to serve our members and our purpose in other ways, like improving our Newspaper & Penpal programs, and starting other programs.

We are open to new structures that help meet the goal of being lead by people most hurt by the prison system, and that help do work that serves our purpose and keep our projects going. One option is to create an Advisory Group in prison, which would have decision-making input, but not decision-making power. We will continue to listen to everyone's input through letters and Feedback Forms,

and follow our Statement of Purpose and Analysis. We will also aim towards having more formerly incarcerated people on the Leadership Circle. We know that not everyone may be in agreement with this decision. This is an open topic for talking about in prison, on the outside, and in the Newspaper.

We remain committed to creating a world of justice, to tearing down all systems of oppression. We work passionately to serve our Family and to create communities that are safe and healthy, knowing that once there were no prisons, and that day will come again.

Black & Pink Free World Leadership Circle,

Jason
Reed
Drake
Ian
Johannes
KC
Gabrielle
Justice

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MELENIE MAHINAMALAMALAMA ELENEKE

Dear community,

We are saddened to say that TGI Justice and many more have lost a dear sister, friend, auntie, daughter, and champion. Melenie Mahinamalamalama Elenike died on Monday, September 9th of natural causes.

--
Please keep Melenie's spirit, her family, and each other in your prayers and thoughts as a community grieves this enormous loss.

Be safe and stay strong,
The TGI Justice Family

ANNOUNCEMENTS?

1. We are currently processing mail from June. We are working on getting more volunteers all the time to go through your mail more quickly. We apologize for the delay.

2. As we continue working on building this survey, we would love more of your feedback on what types of questions you would like to see asked in the survey of nearly 4,000 LGBTQ prisoners. Your input is key to our success.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE: NOVEMBER 20, 2013

LETTERS TO OUR FAMILY

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Black & Pink,

First, let me congratulate the 'free world' people on the dedication they have shown to help our LGBT brothers and sisters in prison. Our experience is unique and largely ignored by the mainstream. Hate and fear unfortunately still rule too many people.

I would like to ask all you readers about a problem I am having in the state of Texas. I have been up for parole consideration numerous times. On three occasions, I was asked by Parole Board members if I am Gay. My sexual orientation should have no relevancy to granting or denying parole. My family is currently discussing this issue with a civil rights attorney, but I know that I am not the only person the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles has asked this question to when considering them for parole.

Any of you who have had this same problem, I ask that you begin to gather any documentation you can to verify you were asked about your sexual orientation in your parole interviews. I personally have such documentation in the form of responses (I-60) from unit parole counselors. If we can show this problem to be widespread, we may be able to proceed with a class action civil suit.

The oppression and discrimination against us as a people must end. State governments should not grant or deny freedom on the basis of whether someone is a homosexual or not. A person's sexual orientation has no business being part of such a process. I will keep you informed of what happens.

Jeffrey, Texas

Dear Black & Pink,

My name is Joe. I'm a Bi-sexual male from Texas. I just wanted to write to all my brothers and sisters out there and tell them to keep your heads up, no matter what comes your way. I also want to let the people that were on hunger strike know that you're not alone, we are with you 100% of the way. Don't give in to the Man, keep going 'till you get what you want and then some. It's hard to be what you want to be and be in prison 'cause people criticize you all the time because you're gay or Bi or whatever you choose to be. But I'm here to tell you, to hell with them, be yourself, don't be something 'cause somebody don't like what you want to be. So just keep on trucking and stay safe.

With much love,

Joe, Texas

Dear Black & Pink,

My name is Kiki and I have been receiving the Newspaper for some time now and a lot of the stories touched my heart. I've been going through it in here, just for being gay. But nothing like some of the stories from those sisters of mine in the Newspaper. That makes me feel like one of these days somebody is gonna test me. I won't touch anyone unless they touch me. Then I will touch them back. And I touch hard.

My issue is when I go to the chow hall, I can't sit just anywhere. People in here don't want to sit next to someone who is gay. They have the nerve to say that it's their table, and then they tell me to move. At that moment I can be ready to lash out and kick their ass. But instead, I move. I am tired of moving when I feel that I shouldn't have to.

I have a little pull here on this yard, so I went to a staff member who's a captain. I asked her if I could sit in an area where they don't let people sit so I won't have any problems and she said yes. Now a lot of the other staff allow me to sit anywhere. I just have to leave once I'm done eating. Now that's better than kicking some ass and going to the hole.

You see, not all staff members are ugly. Some will help if they can, but you have to let them hear your voice. Not speaking is not good at all. We can stand up for what we need to and avoid trouble that makes our time longer in these kind of places. If you stay cool and talk respectful, you can get help, I did.

Keep hope alive and well.

Kiki, Oklahoma

Black & Pink,

I'm writing you regarding the article "Is it Taboo to be Black and Gay" [August 2013 Issue]. I'm not Black, but I'm Latino and I relate in many ways to this article, be it that I'm considered a person of color in a political sense. But over all, I came from the same community landscape described in this article.

At a very young age, I was sucked into the drug and gang mental prison of the streets. Even though I knew inside I was gay, I suppressed these feelings and replaced them with ideas and actions that showed I was tough and deserved to be respected. I sold drugs, and fought a lot, eventually I was arrested and sent to prison. I was very young and foolish back then.

My first sexual experience was in prison and it was with a transwoman, who I grew to care a lot for. At first, I ran around foolishly, explaining how I wasn't gay 'cause I wasn't getting fxxked. I tried to hold on to old friendships that I had built with time. But no matter how hard I tried, I only seemed to be acting and pretending. I grew miserable, because again, I was trying to be someone I wasn't.

I've lost a lot of friends- who actually were never my friends, but I've come to realize that by being who I am, I'm a lot happier. I love transwomen, and I find my life would not be the same without knowing this. I've actually have made many great friendships since accepting who I am. Though sometimes we have doubts, just know that you are not alone. These is a whole family out here that is there for you, ready to embrace you and care for you. You only have to reach out and you'll see- someone will hold your hand through anything.

To all those who continue to struggle, my best wishes and prayers go out to you. Keep your head up and may you find peace and love in your heart!

With all my love,

Your brother and friend,

Manuel, California

Dearest B&P Family and Friends,

Hello All, it's Malici. I've been in a few recent Newspaper issues. I'm in a constant state of alertness and readiness (thanks to my army training) because of other attempts of rape that have happened since my last post. The guards at my unit don't care and I think my letters to PREA are being intercepted. But, I fight on and never let myself be caught unaware. I always stay around people and don't go anywhere alone. I encourage those that suffer as I do to do what I do. Stay around people, fight with all your heart, because I'm in your heart fighting with you as you all are in mine as I fight on. The other problem I'm faced with is that the safe prisons/Protective Custody is being shut down on my unit as of Sept 1, 2013. That's going to cause more problems on this unit. August 11th was my birthday. I'm 31 now and still kicking. My family has stopped writing me and the reason is unknown. I send them letters, but to get no response is taking its toll on me. Anyway, pray for my situation. To my Wiccan brothers and sisters, keep helping on your end. We can make Talismans and spells of protection. My prayer list grows with every issue.

I love you all. I send out kisses and hugs to you all. Stay strong and don't give up. We will win.

In Solidarity,
Justin aka Malici, Texas

Never Be Broken: I am a Militant

To all my Brothers and Sisters: Embrace one another. Stand together, no matter what. Support one another, and always help your brothers and sisters out. We must continue to stand for what's right. We are a family- black, white, brown- LGBTQ people are all races, we are one. Through unity and love we can grow, and yes we're stronger than ever! Look how far we have come, let's continue the struggle, it's far from over.

To my Brothers and Sisters who got it bad and constantly having to deal with foul injustice, people beating on them and trying to take advantage- I say no more! Stand up for yourself, keep your head held high, I feel your pain. We must stand up for one another, Brothers and Sisters, through unity we can all overcome. Please, don't give up. I know the pain you endure- the mind games these pigs try to play, to break you into compliance, don't let them win! How can they break someone who can't and won't be broken? Continue to stand tall together. I read your stories in the Newspaper, it touches me deeply, I've been there with you. I've been cell extracted, gassed, tasered, shot with beanbags, put on stripped cell butt-naked. Even beat up by gangs. I refuse to be broken, I will continue to stand strong! Together, state to state, I ask my Brothers and Sisters to be there for each other, uplift and encourage each other to continue to stand tall and comfortable in your sexuality! I wish you well. Be positive and remember we are a family so love one another. And never be broken!

Comrade S.S., N.A.B.P., Colorado

To All My Black & Pink Family,

Here in California there are a lot of us who embrace our sexual orientation and that of others, without judgment! At this prison we face obstacles together, with a solidarity that's been missing from other parts of the country. I was to encourage every PERSON- gay, lesbian, trans, we are all People, period!- to stand firm and remember that we here in California are with you all in spirit. For all that are reading this in the Newspaper, don't be afraid to write a letter, with your struggles and successes, letting others be encouraged from your words. We must stand United! Take care and stay You!

Dr. Matthew, California

Dear Black & Pink Family,

My name is Matt, a 29 year old openly gay man. I'm dealing with some severe discrimination. A little over a week ago, I was invited to the chapel to play in the band (I'm a trombonist). I am a Lutheran. When I got there, I was taken to the Chaplain who told me I could not participate in the service because I am gay! I was dumbfounded. The Supervisory Chaplain told me to get out.

I have begun the grievance process and sent out letters to the ACLU. I admit, I'm scared. This guy preached a sermon the week before about how the Supreme Court's decision (fall of DOMA) isn't God's law, and homosexuality is still an abomination. He also answers only to the warden, so he could disappear me easily. There are plenty of religious zealots here, both real and fake. I am still going to fight, though. I only was able to come out since coming to prison, and finally feel secure in who I am. I am fighting, come what may.

I didn't expect this in Massachusetts, the state has been so pro-gay. But it did, and here I am. I am a gay Christian fighting for access to my church.

I'd ask for your help in anyway you can. There's nothing you can do about the sleepless nights, the fear, the depression. Maybe you can pray.

Stay strong and proud. Wish me luck.

Matthew, Massachusetts

To all my LGBTQ Family,

I love you all and wish the best of the rest of 2013 to you all. Well, I want you to know I have made it one more year on the Earth as of March 31, 2013, I'm now 30 years old. See, I was born 3/31/83 with HIV, and lost my mother in 2008 to AIDS. My doctors told me that I would not live to see the age of 15. Well 15 + 15 = 30. I have been blessed, Amen! See I want you all to know that no matter what came your way, God will make a way for you to get through it all. It has been many time I have wanted to just give up, but I could not and I'm still fighting my way through it all. So as I close this letter to you my LGBTQ Family, I want you to remember these 4 words:

Hope, Love, Faith, and Life!

Forever I remain,
Brielle Jello, Louisiana

LETTERS TO OUR FAMILY

Black & Pink,

I don't know where I should begin this. I'm in the RHU for 45 days for "Refusing to obey an order." Long story short, that happened, but the C/O lied on the misconduct, as usual, and the hearing examiner took her side. Figures. That's what they do. I was in the yard when another inmate and I were talking and he "threatened a guard," and he received 30 days. Yeah, how does that work. Well, frankly, I file paperwork on them for any and everything, just like they do on us. Grievances, facility manager appeals, final appeals, and so on. Whatever I feel is necessary, I will go all the way. Also, they hate the fact that I'm not one of their brown-nosing, ass-kissing rats. They know Queens know it all. Why should I give them that information? They can't release me if I did. My sentence will not be vacated, so they can vacate that idea. Moving on, I have time to write and work on things, and my poetry is one!

-Puddin, Pennsylvania

Dear my B&P fam,

My name is Adam A.K.A. Whyte Coco, and I'm a 25 year old bisexual man. I am in a locked up unit and I'm responding to Sarah. I like your attitude and I also know how C/O's love to be assholes, and I usually give them hell and find it really hard not to react to them. ...they love to make our time hard and treat us prisoners like shit, like we aren't even human. It's really messed up and we all have to rise above the BS, bite our tongues, and walk away. I know it's hard but we can do it, I'm doing it, Sarah is. We gotta stay strong and get out of prison so we can fight from the outside, where we have a winning chance. Be smart my brothaz and sistaz, and keep your heads up high. Smile. I get out soon, and I plan on putting a stop to this injustice. So stay joyful, and stay safe. Much love to all my LGBTQ fam. We are all together in this together. Empowerment movement is for us!

Adam, Indiana

Dear Black and Pink family,

Greetings from the resistance of the Varner Super Max A.D.C. known as the Pink Panther Party (PPP). My name, deep purple, and I am a Gay Pride activist, along with my friend Skittles and the rest of us trying to survive the beatings, the discrimination, the suffering and pain that we all go through while being proud and in prison. Corrupt wardens, racist guards- when will the madness end? Sprayed, beat, & placed on behavior control with 21 days of replacement meal because I had dyed my personal t-shirt pink with Kool-Aid. Will that break my pride? No! It will motivate me to stand strong with my proud family and fight until my battle as well as every LGBTQ on the face of this earth is free to live life free to the fullest. My name is Stan, I'm young I'm gay, I'm strong, and I'm proud. I will not fall easily if not at all without my voice, and my worldwide family's voice heard. We are people too, and we need to all come together to make a stand, it's time to drop our purses and strike back until we come out on top and all of our needs met. This is our moment to shine, our chance to make history, our chance to be recognized. Don't talk about it, be about it. We are a real army, we are a kind that can take a world's hate and corruption and turn it into good. We are survivors, we are leaders. We are nation. From me to my Black and Pink family, and the rest of my fellows, Be Strong, Be Fierce, Be You.

Sincerely,
Stan, Arkansas

Dear Black & Pink,

Please allow me this opportunity to convey my astronomical appreciation for the Newspaper and those who make it happen. I would like to share my thoughts after reading the August 2013 article "Is it Taboo to be Black and Gay? Why is it Okay to be Labeled Down Low Instead?"

My response is certainly not an effort to impugn anyone's integrity. To the contrary, what I wish to personify is that the phrase "closet" or "down low" are sometimes made analogous to "Uncle Tom" or the "N-word." To pretend to be straight sexually, or to pretend to be straight socially, is overall a harmful pattern of behavior in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual communities. Being in a straight marriage and making it on the side secretly; being willing to go to bed but refusing to have a lesbian, gay, or bisexual relationship; changing the gender of the "friend" being spoken about; or throwing biased remarks upon the very acts that he or she has been involved with! If we are liberated, we can be open with our sexuality. Being in the closet must end. Come Out!

As a person born Muslim, I speak from an extremely exceptional set of circumstances in that my parents knew of my bisexuality before I did. I found out or understood when I was in first grade. Although I was never the source of being an outcast by my family and friends, I have endured hatred by those who were totally unaware of my presence. Specifically, I sat around in and out of prison, listening to homophobic remarks. The devastation worsened when most of those same homophobes were seen in full splendor soliciting down in the Dupont Circle areas of Northwest Washington, D.C.- my place of residency. Even more so rings true throughout prisons, in which James so eloquently pointed out in his August 2013 article.

Thus, in saying "Come Out," we have to have clear heads about a few things in which such a statement pivots:

"Closet" lesbian or gay people are our sisters and brothers, and must be defended against attacks by each other and "straight" people. (I don't like using the term "straight," for it implies we're the counter, or "crooked.")

The fear of coming out is not paranoia; the stakes are high with the loss of family ties, loss of jobs, loss of straight friends, threat of violence, etc. These are all reminders that the oppression is real, as opposed to a figment of our imagination! Each of us must make quantum leaps toward "openness" at our own pace and impulse, because being open is the foundation of freedom- it has to be built freely and solidly.

Being in the "closet" connotes a broad term covering a multitude of forms of defense: self hatred, lack of strength, and habit. We're all "closet" cases in a sense in that very few of us were "flagrant" or "flamboyant" at the age of seven! We must accord our brothers and sisters the same modicum of respect and patience as we once needed people to have with us. To do otherwise would be an unpardonable way of chasing our bothers & sisters away! So let's unite!

I close by asking that we ponder the pain involved with bringing about a change, compared to the pain associated with remaining the same.

In Love, Solidarity, and Revolution!

Khalid, aka "Bāyh!", Maryland

TRANS FOLKS DOWN FOR THE FIGHT

ARE POLICE PROFILING TRANSGENDER AMERICANS?

AlJazeera English

The modern gay rights movement was born on June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn, on Christopher Street in New York City's West Village. Resistance broke out in response to a violent police raid against the gay community, and riots continued for several days. Many of the key leaders were transgender women, such as Sylvia Rivera, who had started her activism during the 1950s civil rights movement and continued until her death in 2002.

More than 40 years later, correspondent Christof Putzel and I returned to Christopher Street and found that even in a place long considered a haven for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, many LGBT individuals are still living in fear of police violence.

Mitchell Mora, a young activist, said police had harassed him for dressing feminine, and his friends for not fitting into narrow gender roles.

"Christopher Street is a historic location, and it's always been a haven for queer folks, especially young folks of color. But with gentrification, there's been aggressive policing here, and that's a really scary thing," Mora told us. "It's scary when safe spaces are taken away from us."

It's not just in New York City. A 2012 study by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs found that transgender people across the U.S. experience three times as much police violence as non-transgender individuals. Those numbers are even higher for transgender people of color. Even when transgender people were the victims of hate crimes, 48 percent reported receiving mistreatment from the police when they went for help.

Andrea Ritchie, an attorney specializing in police misconduct, told us that law enforcement sees policing gender roles as part of their work.

"I think most people are familiar with racial profiling," she told us. "But I think people are less familiar with how gender is really central to policing in the United States. That includes expectations in terms of how women are supposed to look, how men are supposed to look, how women are supposed to act and how men are supposed to act."

When people look or act queer or gender nonconforming, she said, police "often read that as disorder and they often perceive that person as already disorderly, as already suspicious, as already prone to violence."

Dean Spade, a lawyer and founder of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, a poverty law center that represents transgender people, agrees. "That's part of what policing is – is this kind



of generalized suspicion," he said. "Does something look out of place? And transgender people are often that thing that looks out of place." *Continued on Page 8....*

STRUGGLING FOR RIGHTS!

Revolutionary Greetings!

Comrades, many people have asked me why I am so passionate about protecting and promoting the rights of the LGBTQ community as well as forging a close knit United Front against Imperialism, Gender, Class, and national oppression. The answer really isn't that complicated.

In 1996 I was living in the Twin Cities area, Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota. I was homeless and jobless. The winter was brutal that year. To make a long story short, member of the LGBTQ community gave me a job at a nightclub located in St. Paul which sponsored fabulous lip-sync shows. They also helped me find a place to live!

These beautiful human beings offered me unconditional love at the lowest point in my life while I was in the "Free World." Some things don't need a whole lot of explanation. However, maybe one day I will share with my Black & Pink Family some of the glimpses I caught of what was a truly wonderful Queer life in the Twin Cities. Stay tuned, more will be revealed!

Serving the People and Retaliation of the Oppressors: Part II

Revolutionary Greetings to my entire Black & Pink Family, and a special shout out to all Panthers and Political Prisoners across the United States. In my previous installment of this series I discussed some of the Serve the People programs and strategies implemented by the original Black Panther Party. There just aren't enough words to express the gratitude I have for pioneers such as Huey, Bobby, George, and Angela! Their selfless efforts can never be duplicated but we may honor their memory and actions with sincere attempts to imitate them. Comrades, in the year 2013 the 'spirit' of the Panther is alive and well. Please remember when you sacrifice and give your all for the people, it comes with a price.

Recently, I viewed a photograph of Attorney Lynne Stewart, she was in her Federal prison khaki uniform, she had lost mostly all of her hair, as she is being ravaged by cancer. And what is her crime? Providing the best possible representation she could to her client, the blind Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman. This is a crime? Many will say "Lynne ain't no Panther." You're right, but you don't have to be a Panther to embrace the tenets of Pantherism! Serving the People comes with a price.

And what about our beloved Comrade Assata Shakur? \$2 million dollars placed on her head. For what? Speaking truth to power? Comrades, more and more we, me, you Revolutionary minded people, are being targeted by the oppressors because we dare to challenge the status quo.

The primary function of Black & Pink is to fight for and protect the rights of LGBTQ human beings. We take a special interest in our incarcerated Family members, mainly because of the vulnerable position of being in prison. Recently the Department of Justice released a report on sexual abuse and assaults of prisoners across the United States. The state of Texas was at the top of the list in reference to the percentage of prisoners who had been raped or suffered from sexual abuse and assaults. The Bill Clements Unit located in Amarillo, Texas, and the Mark Stiles Unit located in Beaumont, Texas, were two of the worst sites in the report.

Establishing a Watch the Pigs program in various Texas state prisons has been very productive and successful for the members of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party prison chapter. We adopted this program after a Free World program in Los Angeles and Oakland, California implemented by the Black Riders Liberation Party. The purpose of our program is to shed light and raise awareness of the many acts of physical abuse perpetuated by the TDCJ employees who target the most vulnerable cross section of Texas prisoners. Through our experience and research, we have found that although the state of Texas has channels set up to report acts of sexual abuse and even violent attacks by TDCJ employees, the Texas State Attorney General's Office which is headed by Gregg Abbott, does a horrible job prosecuting these instances of abuse.

Furthermore, Abbott has seemed to have given a mandate to the Office of the Inspector General to poorly investigate or turn a blind eye to these heinous acts of abuse and violence that take place in Texas prisons. If there is no threat of realistic accountability, Texas will continue to be at the top of the Abuse Survey conducted by the United States Department of Justice.

I recently was visited by a Texas state prison employee who told me, "Sir, it is your right to write grievances and to write legislators when you feel your civil rights have been violated, but know that the Parole Board frowns on those types of grievances."

Comrades, on July 17, 2013, I was given my 3rd denial for Parole in the state of Texas, a 2 year set-off! Serving the People comes with a price and the oppressors will retaliate against the most advanced political prisoners.

The title of Comrade Huey P. Newton's book *To Die For the People* was actually taken from a famous saying of Chairman Mao Tse Tung: "In significance, to die for the interests of the People is weightier than Mount Tai, but to work hard and die for the Fascists, for those who exploit and oppress the people, is lighter than a swan's down."

Comrades we are living in a time where the U.S. Government is utilizing spy programs, scare tactics, and fear to keep the new generation of Panthers and Panther-minded individuals in check. I implore and exhort you to not break, don't lose your revolutionary fighting spirit. I ask that you support our fallen comrades who languish in Amerikkka's modern day gulags. Mumia Abu Jamal, Sundiata Acoli, Jamil Al-Amin, Sekou Odinga, Seth Hayes, Herman Bell, Dave Gilbert, and the list goes on and on.

Do not buy into the false propaganda put out there, in which the original Panthers are portrayed as hate-mongers and homophobes. The originals were and still are Revolutionaries who believed in abolishing all forms of oppression

whether it be Race, Class, Nation, or Gender oppression. And this is the mandate and mission of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party to lay the groundwork for the socialist revolution! Yes! I said it! We are anti-imperialists. Remember always stand up straight because no one can ride your back if you stand up straight and look the oppressor in the eye to let them know you will not be intimidated.

The place in which the most revolutionary potential exists is inside America's prison system. The Revolution won't be televised! I'd like to thank the Black & Pink Family for all their love and support. The work Black & Pink is doing is putting theory into practice, and every month that this paper comes out is a Serve the People program in progress! Panther Love!

Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win, All Power to the People,

Comrade Malik, Texas

Captain of Information, New Afrikan Black Panther Party prison chapter

As strong as we are, why are we still victimized?

The laws are there for us to utilize, and the time is now.

The life we live is our life & our life only. Recently a large amount of the prison population in California participated in what's been classified as the biggest hunger strike recorded. But it only goes so far. Many people didn't know it was going on, even though it lasted 60 days. If they heard about it, did they know why they were striking? I was reading letters to our family in California, and a particular theme continues to rear its ugly head- Bigotry. Since I've been receiving my Black & Pink Newspaper for the last year, a lot of our queer folks are still being harassed, beaten, threatened, etc, by inmates and c/o's alike.

During the strike I began thinking, what if the LGBTQ community in prison- California in particular- demanded equal protection through a facility or program that's not SHU/Ad Seg/PHU/SNY, but instead a facility that's GP? What if we began documenting and filing every verbal and physical abuse we see and hear? Enough is enough! It's time to fight back and put the people on notice. Especially out here in California.

Queer folks in California, please take note: The inmate appeal process is designed to discourage you into not filing any grievances with all of their back and forth so that your time (30 days) can run out. But when your safety and livelihood is at stake, file that paper. Now that California is moving into a new direction with its policies, we should too. First thing that we must understand and realize, when our queers are removed from GP, it's usually done by a person who belongs to a particular group or gang, and this makes that whole group/gang responsible. We need to stop the harm done by individuals, and by the group. And make the person and the group responsible. That's not snitching- that's called fighting back and using their ignorance against them.

Also file against the whole yard's administration. You read right. The reason being they already know of the standing policy of their yards against queers. That makes them liable! Contact your local District Attorney Office immediately after the incident has happened with an affidavit stating what happened to you, who did it, when it happened, etc, and ask that the right people be held responsible. The laws should protect all people, no one is exempt!

Make sure you do this because CDCR has a tendency of silencing problematic inmates when it's obvious they are going after them as well. Give them no wiggle room. If your grievance falls on deaf ears, then report it to the California Attorney General, along with the CDCR Ombudsman, Office of Internal Affairs, and Office of the Inspector General. CDCR hates big brother in their business. Don't back down on your grievance, because this is your life and doing so you'll allow them to win. We don't want that.

We have the right to exist as much as anyone else. They do not have the right to determine who can stay and go on a yard. What I'm proposing is radical but what's a revolution without a strong blow? I would like for all my queer inmates to have an institution of our own where we will not be targeted verbally and physically thrown in the holes for so-called protection and security reasons, or on SNY compounds where they are still being abused.

This can only work if 602's are followed through on and civil suits begin hitting the courts. Use your organizational skills and capabilities. Those that are not documented as either transgender, transsexual, gay, bi, lesbian, etc, I suggest you give that a thought 'cause this is only the tip of the iceberg, but if we stick together in solidarity they will have no choice but to comply because a strong lawsuit is a muthafucka. I'm in the process of drafting up a single 602 and a group 602 for those of us who want to exist in peace, love, and happiness.

But remember, it's now time for us to be heard!! Our voice is strong enough, and our demands demand such.

With Love and Solidarity, Your queer brotha,

James aka Rogue, California

Editor's Note: James suggests using the "Hate Crime and Terrorist Act" against individuals and groups who harass and assault us. The Free World Leadership Circle encourages resistance in creative ways, like using their laws against them when it's helpful. But we don't like strengthening or creating more Hate Crime and anti-Terrorism laws, because they do not protect us, they strengthen the prison-industrial complex that we are fighting against, and they send more people to prison. Let's keep talking and fighting together!

Fear of judgment
 Alienation
 Probing stares
 Awkward silences
 Familial love being repossessed
 A God's stern admonition
 Ridicule
 Scorn
 Possible verbal or physical assault
 is what keeps you there.

Courage
 Self love
 Support
 Honesty
 Trust
 Stability and safety
 are what will open the door.
Patrice, Illinois

Coming Out

Feeling the day
 Feeling the pain
 Feeling the Gay
 With no signs along the way

Awful how oppressions continually
 As rain, fall your way
 Feeling confused, improperly fit
 Choices and shout of haters
 Chase your rainbows away

The sun is shining bright
 Reach deep down with all your might
 Fight your fight and make it right
 The day is gay
 It will help to light your way
Shiloh, California



Art by: Racheal Anne, Texas

The Act of Freedom

I can look in the mirror and accept a new me
 I can live my life now more comfortably
 One doesn't have to hide behind tears
 Duck any corners or lie to another face
 Just know that the old me has been replaced
George, California

Rebellion

I sit back reminiscing and envision my intuition
 to have no limits
 And everything I touch glistens
 But it's twisted
 'Cause it leaves me in the trenches
 So my decision
 is to eliminate opposition
 I'm ambitious
 so I'm itching for a mission
 To put demolition to this tyranny system
 The knowledge that I seek is promulgated to a limit
 'Cause the tyrant don't want me to overcome the 1% business
 They call this living
 This got to be a gimmick
 Knowledge, wisdom, understanding
 can't let it diminish
 Unveil and reveal that the only way we going to get it
 Rebel and Revolution in the same sentence
 it sound distant
 We need persistence and it's simple
 We try to overcome oppression and they say that we're different
 They just so ignorant
 Which makes me want to be belligerent
 Then they mention persecution and a sentence
 Put me in a box and aim to denigrate my image
 But the genuine remember
 and it only keeps them driven
 The rebellion has risen
 you should keep it living
stretch da rebel, Pennsylvania

Enigma

Something that is supposed
 to be so wrong
 Then why does it seem
 so right?

If something like this
 is not suppose to happen
 Then why are we
 so happy?

Judged on appearance
 They cannot understand
 why you are in love
 with this "man"

The truth of the matter
 should not be
 what is between my legs
 but what is visibly
 leading to better, happier days
Puddin, Pennsylvania

When you look into my eyes
 What do you see?
 Do you see a prisoner or a person that's free?
 Do you see a gangster or a gentleman?
 Someone you look at and say
 I wanna stand next to him
 Or do you see someone you'd run from
 Someone you wouldn't call a friend
 Brother or son
 When I look in the mirror
 All I see is pain
 Pain through snow, sleet, rain
 Others see me as a heartless thug
 Just waiting to be blessed by an angel above
 They say love will heal the soul
 But without it you feel broken and old
 Hoping to see a loving hand
 Hoping to embrace a long lost friend
 In a lonely prison cell
 I'll count my days 'till I reach hell
 If by chance, I go the other way
 I hope to feel the love one day
 So look into my eyes
 And tell me what you see
 Can you tell death is a part of me?
 I guess only time will tell
 As I sit here in this dark lonely cell
Ricky, Nevada

FAMILY FEEDBACK & ARTWORK FORM!

FAMILY FEEDBACK SUMMARY: AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

August Newspaper Feedback: Recent Court Rulings

1. Affirmative Action Ruling (Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin) Verdict:

Universities will need to showcase evidence race is a “necessary” component in their admissions policy that can’t be achieved by any other means.

B&P Family Feedback: 10 out of 12 people disagreed. Sample response: “This is a thinly veiled condemnation of equal rights, effectively legalizing racist practices based on a notion of good faith... a premise that prisons are QUITE familiar with.”

2. Native Sovereignty Ruling (Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl) Verdict:

A Cherokee father who has appealed for custody of his daughter under the Indian Child Welfare Act—a legislative attempt to preserve the integrity of indigenous sovereignty—has no parental claims above those of the white couple trying to adopt.

B&P Family Feedback: 7 out of 10 people disagreed, others were neutral. Sample responses: “I identify as Native, so it was appalling to see once again our Native American sovereignty, our peace-given rights spit on... again.” “I’m currently assisting another prisoner with parental rights, and there’s simply no legal basis for the holding that a biological father has no parental claim to his child than a couple trying to adopt”.

3. Voting Rights Act Ruling (Shelby County v. Holder) Verdict:

The preclearance requirements of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, imposed on certain states to curb discriminatory policies in voter registration, are no longer constitutional.

B&P Family Feedback: 9 out of 11 people disagreed, others were neutral. Sample response: “After this ruling, several states began implementing all kinds of restrictive policies in order to vote. Where is the democracy in that? United States has become so hypocritical in politics and in the pursuit of happiness that it seemed rigged and fake”

4. Repeal of DOMA, Defense of Marriage Act (United States v. Windsor)

B&P Family Feedback: 7 out of 11 people agreed, others were neutral. Sample responses: “Not the answer, but definitely a big step. The fight and struggle is for the benefits given to marriage couples by our government. It needs to be ironed out to take into consideration the [entire] scope of our demographic, but I’m happy. “, “While I think it’s highly ineffective to make any type of benefit contingent upon a state contract, especially a contract which razes the walls between church and state, i do believe that if people want to enter in that agreement, they should be able to. i am adamantly against church/state interference in personal affairs as well as assimilationist ideology “

5. Florida trial verdict (Not Guilty) for George Zimmerman’s murder of Trayvon Martin

B&P Family Feedback: 9 out of 11 people disagreed, others were neutral. Sample responses: “I think the trial was no more than a series of formalities orchestrated to validate the racism inherent in society and the justice system... Oscar Grant... Rodney King... etc etc”, “Zimmerman got off easy. Trayvon walking around after dark did not give Zimmerman the right to kill him. Now let a black man kill a white man for the same reason- the black man would have been hanged in the middle of town. I’m sending my best wishes to the Martin family.”

September Newspaper Feedback: Proposed Hotline / Black & Pink Phone Number

Continued on Page 8..

On the Inside Artwork Form

Black & Pink is facilitating the revival of the art program in a new way, called On the Inside! If you are an artist, here’s how it will work. Create any artwork that you would like (drawings, cards, paintings). Some of the artwork will be accepted for an upcoming exhibit; the artist will be promptly compensated \$50 for all accepted artwork (except \$10 for cards) and postage expenses incurred. Any artwork that isn’t accepted for the exhibit for any reason will be promptly returned to the artist, or other address. If your artwork is accepted for the Exhibition, you assign all right, title and interest in the work to us (in other words you transfer ownership of the art and its copyrights to the Exhibit coordinators) as consideration for participation in the show. The artwork will never be resold, and will likely be donated to an LGBTQ Archive in years to come. **Please do not write your name and number anywhere on the front of the artwork to protect your privacy. We are all excited to see what you create! Please fill out a questions 1 through 6 once, and questions 7 through 10 on separate slip like this for each piece of artwork you submit. Please mail the artwork with the information below on slips to:**

On the Inside, PO Box 173, 2658 Griffith Park Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90039

- 1) Your preferred name for the exhibit.
- 2) Your gender pronouns (eg. she / he / xe / they).
- 3) How do you identify? (Optional: gender, sexuality, race, age).
- 4) Your legal name, number, and mailing address.
- 5) If my artwork is not accepted for the exhibit:
 - Send it to my address (please list)
 - Send it to another address (please list)
 - Black & Pink can keep and display it
- 6) Preferred method of compensation / alternative to compensation if not allowed:
Donation into commissary account (Please include deposit slips or instructions):
- Magazines/books (Details):
Alternative to compensation:
- 7) Title of artwork (for display at exhibit).
- 8) Description of artwork (for display at exhibit).
- 9) Anything else you’d like the exhibit curator to know about the artwork or about yourself which can be shared / feel free to write on another page, and please note that the exhibit curator is not able to be a penpal):

10) I, _____ (Name), give On the Inside permission for my artwork to be exhibited in person, press, catalogues, internet, etc. Sign: _____ Date: _____

BLACK & PINK INCARCERATED FAMILY FEEDBACK!

—rip slip here—

Please read the Black and Pink Leadership Changes (pages 1 and 2) and respond. Feel free to write in additional comments about your answer and the leadership changes. **Do you agree with the proposed leadership changes (circle):** Yes No No opinion

ARE POLICE PROFILING TRANSGENDER AMERICANS? CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Transgender Americans are also more likely to be poor and homeless, because of discrimination in jobs, housing and access to social services.

"If you are poor and you can't access those things, you're more likely to be poor and on the street which puts you in the path of the police," said Spade.

For transgender Americans, this cycle of poverty, homelessness and prison can start early, since many are rejected by their families as teenagers, and end up in foster care and the juvenile justice system. "Those systems are predictors for the adult punishment systems," Spade said. "Let's say a young trans girl is placed in a boys' group home, and she doesn't feel safe there. She leaves, so she's possibly living on the street, doing whatever she can to get by. Then she ends up in the criminal justice system."

More hate crime laws might seem like one way to better protect transgender Americans. But advocates point out that much of the violence trans communities face is at the hands of the police itself. "And so the notion that expanding that system's power to punish will somehow save us is really harmful," Spade explained.

Alasia Farell has been arrested three times on suspicion of prostitution, she claims for simply carrying condoms.

The New York Police Department declined to speak with us, but Professor Maki Haberfeld, a vocal defender of the department's policies who also leads diversity training for hundreds of NYPD officers every year, told America Tonight the department doesn't use profiling. "But police officers come with their own biases, their own perceptions of who is the usual suspect," she said.

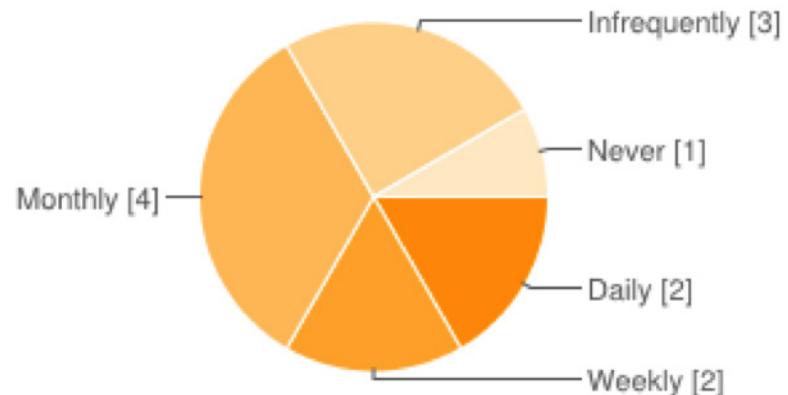


Advocacy organizations are working to change the discrimination LGBT people face. The group TransJustice, for example, trains transgender New Yorkers on their rights in interactions with police.

FAMILY FEEDBACK SUMMARY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Page 8

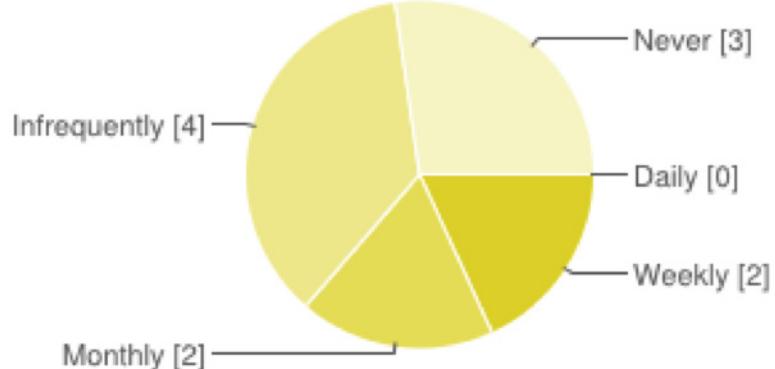
If such a hotline existed, how often would you call it?



What hours would you be able to call the hotline?

Most people would be able to call almost the entire day.

How often do you make phone calls now?



Who do you call when you make phone calls now? Do you call any hotlines now?

Most people call family members. Only one person called a hotline; it was mentioned several times that 1-800 numbers cannot be called (good to know!!).

If you would call the hotline, what would you be looking for?

There were some really great suggestions out there--thank you so much for your ideas! Six people sought a friend that was a good listener; five wanted support with LGBTQ specific issues or mental health struggles, five suggested legal support and assistance maneuvering the system including re-entry, and three wanted to be able to report abuse by staff or other prisoners and for advocacy and action to be taken as a result.

ADDRESSES: PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESSES FOR MAIL!

Please Note: You can send multiple requests/topics in one envelope! For privacy concerns, others can't sign you up for the newsletter, but you can include a newsletter subscription with any other request. There's no need to send separate requests in more than one envelope.

	Black & Pink - _____ 614 Columbia Rd Dorchester, MA 02125
Please write one or more of these topics in the top line of the address:	
Newsletter Subscriptions (Start or Stop)	Black & Pink - Newsletter Subscriptions
Newsletter Submissions (Poems, Art & Stories)	Black & Pink - Newsletter Submissions
"Outside" Free Pen-Pal Request (Please note: Pen-Pal Request Form will be in this newsletter quarterly)	Black & Pink - Pen-Pal
Address Change (Will take a little time to update; at this time, we are mostly unable to send back issues.)	Black & Pink - Address Change
Black & Pink Organization Feedback (especially the slip on Page 7)	Black & Pink - Feedback
Request Erotica	Black & Pink - Erotica
Submit to Erotica Zine	Black & Pink - Gabrielle
Religious Support	Black & Pink - Religion
Volunteering (Send thank you cards to donors, etc.)	Black & Pink - Volunteer
Advocacy Requests (include details about situation and thoughts about how calls or letters might help)	Black & Pink - Advocacy

LEGAL: Consider writing to Lambda Legal for support or referrals with legal issues that you are having. "Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work." Lambda Legal, National Office 120 Wall Street, Suite 1500, New York, NY 10005, 212-809-8585

Assistance with legal research for everyone, and preparing for disciplinary and parole hearings only for people in Massachusetts.

Hotline (9am-5pm EST): 617-495-3127 By mail: Prison Legal Assistance Project, 6 Everett Street, Suite 5107, Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA 02138

Another resource to turn to, if you can afford the subscription (\$24 yearly, payable with new stamps), is Prison Legal News. This resource was co-started by a former gay prisoner and Men Against Sexism organizer, Ed Mead, though now it is run by Paul Wright. You can reach them by writing to: Prison Legal News, P.O. Box 2420, West Brattleboro, VT 05303

SURVIVORS: Just Detention International provides support for prisoners who are survivors of sexual abuse. Write them at the legal address below for a packet. Each packet includes an introductory letter, a list of local resources, fact sheets, publications about recovery from sexual abuse, and a letter of hope from another survivor. Ms. Chris Daley, Esq., 3325 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 340, Los Angeles, CA 90010